

DRAFT
SOQUEL DEMONSTRATION STATE FOREST ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES, Monday, August 29, 2011

INTRODUCTIONS: The following members were present (their affiliations are also listed)

- Donna Bradford (Santa Cruz County)
- Steve Butler (Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County)
- Patty Ciesla (Stewards of Soquel Forest)
- Eric Huff (Board of Forestry)
- Tim Hyland (California Department of Parks and Recreation)
- Terris Kastner (California Department of Fish and Game)
- Patricia Marland (Neighbor)
- Larry Serpa (The Nature Conservancy)
- Steve Staub (Registered Professional Forester)

AGENDA: Reviewed and approved

EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS: This is any Committee business that is conducted outside a Committee meeting; it needs to be disclosed to comply with the Bagley-Keene Act. There were none.

COMMITTEE GOALS: There was a quick review of the Statement of Purpose. The Committee's main goals are to advise the Director of CAL FIRE on matters relating to the Forest, and to review and approve the management plan.

COMMITTEE OFFICERS: Steve Staub continues as the Committee Chair. The following additional officers were nominated and elected:

- Vice Chair: Patty Ciesla. Patty will act as Chair in Steve's absence.
- Secretary: Patricia Marland. Patricia will record and distribute meeting minutes.

BYLAWS: The old ByLaws have been updated to reflect the new list of members.

ACTION: Review the ByLaws to prepare for voting at the next meeting on accepting or revising them.

ROLE OF THE BOARD OF FORESTRY: It is the Board's policy to review all the State Forests' management plans every five years (with revisions done on ~20-year cycle). The Board's Management Committee has done a preliminary review of the draft updates to the Soquel General Forest Management Plan. Eric will be the Committee's liason with the Board.

MEETING SCHEDULE: The following issues were discussed:

- Does the Committee want to start working on the existing draft updates to the management plan?
- Does the Committee want to start work before a permanent Forest Manager is appointed? Rich Sampson has been the acting Forest Manager for over two years, but interviews for the new manager will be held next week!
- How often should the Committee meet?

The Committee decided to meet once per month for two to three hours. At least initially, meetings will be held on the first Monday of the month, starting at 9:00. The dates of the next two meeting will be October 3 and November 7. Meetings will continue to be held at the Loma Prieta Community Center, if the room is available.

FIELD TRIP: The group departed for a tour of the Soquel Demonstration State Forest. A brief summary of the various stops follows.

- **HIGHLAND WAY ENTRANCE:** The access road, bridge and parking lot are owned by Redwood Empire; the Forest has an easement for their use. Problems include the narrow width of the bridge, run-off from the parking lot, and late-night parties (the road is generally left open to the parking lot; there is a substantial gate on the west side of the lot which is kept locked).
- **LOWER HELIPAD:** The initial logging of the forest occurred from the late 1920s into the 1940s. The adjacent redwood grove has well-preserved spring board notches, and is a potential site for a future outdoor classroom. The helipad will also house a weather station in the future.
- **RIM PLAN:** Logging operations are active, and a tree was felled as a demonstration. This plan covers 158 acres and will be logged via individual tree selection. Goals are to develop unevenaged structure and increase redwood occupancy. It is projected that the plan will produce 1.8 million board feet of timber, valued at \$875,000. Patty described work of the Stewards of Soquel Forest. Their corps of volunteers include neighbors, mountain bikers, and volunteers recruited through trailworkers.com. Their work on the Forest is focused on broom bashing and trail maintenance. They hope to reestablish a new route for the single track trail that formerly ran through the plan site.
- **BADGER SPRINGS:** The lunch speaker gave an excellent summary of the history of the Forest. The adjacent Forest of Nisene Marks State Park had a Southern Pacific Railroad station by the late 1880s. This provided transportation that led to logging and development of the area. The Nisene Marks family donated the park land to State Parks in the early 1960s. The donation included a deed restriction barring dogs or horses – this has been interpreted to also bar mountain biking. Due to the combined desires to open up adjacent areas for horse and bike riding, and to control erosion triggered by

the flood of 1982, Pelican Lumbar Company offered to sell the Forest property to State Parks. After they turned it down, the lands were donated to The Nature Conservancy for 25 years through a complicated mechanism involving a debt-for-nature swap between the Bank of America and the State. Senator Sam Farr was instrumental in negotiating the transaction. Ownership of the Forest will be transferred to CAL FIRE in 2013.

The draft updates to the management plan were distributed and discussed. Issues raised included whether the Committee wished to review this or a future draft; updating the plan to reflect visions for the future; and the need to adopt the existing draft plans for Fisheries and Education and Recreation.

ACTION: The draft updates and copies of the Fisheries and Education and Recreation plans will be posted on the website

(http://www.fire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/resource_mgt_stateforests_soquel.php)

Committee members will review the first six chapters of the management plan (through the Fisheries chapter) for the October meeting.

A project is planned to add wood to strategic locations in Soquel Creek to improve habitat for coho salmon and steelhead. Staff hope to implement this project next summer.

Plans are also in the works to divert water from the waterfall to a new water tank. The stored water would be used as needed to water the roads for dust control and would also be a potential water source for firefighting. This would avoid having to draft water directly from Soquel Creek to meet these needs.

- **LONG RIDGE CROSSING:** Installation of a bridge here would reduce impacts when crossing the creek for the wood – in – the – stream project and for logging the Fern Gulch plan.
- **STREAMBANK FAILURE ON HIHN'S MILL ROAD:** Plan is to repair by buttressing the base with logs and using an excavator to compact and re-grade the road fill. Stream flow will be re-located from the adjacent channel while this work occurs.

NEXT MEETING: Will be on October 7, subject to change if the new Forest Manager isn't on board yet. **ACTION:** The Committee members requested that CAL FIRE's Director make hiring the Manager a high priority.

- **NOREN ACQUISITION:** These three parcels, located on the Soquel-San Jose Road, have been acquired by CAL FIRE as a step towards developing an access point on the west side of the Forest. Additional steps needed to complete this access are building a bridge across Hester Creek and acquiring property on the east side of the creek from CHY. The CHY property is also the potential future site of the Forestry Education Center.